Chloe Konnor

10/20/08

English 8-5.5

American Born Chinese Book Review

    How would you feel if you were so different from everyone else that no one understood you? American Born Chinese, a short graphic novel by Gene Yang, is a fabulous light read, simplistic but deep. It is curiously divided into three stories, Jin, Chin-kee, and The Monkey King. This book cuts right to point getting in your head the idea of negative and positive stereotypes. I really think that this is the main theme is Yang’s Pulitzer Prize book, ABC. Gene Yang explores all the regions of stereotyping on different races especially Chinese stereotypes. Jin, Wei-Chen, and Chin-Kee especially are the main negatively stereotyped Chinese childeren growing up in American society where everyone is the same and whoever different makes no sense to them. I love the way Gene Yang dove head first into what he had had to have known would have been an extremely touchy subject to not only maybe Chinese people but also could have offended some Americans. Yang really throws aside all social conformities and focuses on getting the Chinese stereotypes across to all people including the children who read this book.

    The Monkey King is another one of the book's main characters. He has his own lesson to be learned from. The Monkey King is intelligent and sly getting his way more than half the time. But MK is not a nice little monkey. Because he is so disciplined and practiced at his gongfu he thinks that he is somewhat of a god worthy of the appreciation and respect of all people, especially the immortals. But really the Monkey King is no more than a monkey, something he has to accept in the end after all his violence and obstinence. One of the main components of Yang's book is the complexity of the characters. Jin, Wei-Chen, and the Monkey King, in the end, must accept the fact that they are who they are and there's no changing the color of your skin or your accent. Instead they must acknowledge and embrace who they are and use it to benefit themselves and others.